

Gender Quality and Phenomena of Glass Ceiling in the Hierarchal Structure of an Organization: An Empirical Study of Umeå University

Ammar Arshad¹, Muhammad Waqas^{2*}, Shariq Zia³ & Shahzad Ahmad²

¹Department of Management Sciences, Lahore Garrison University, Punjab, Pakistan;

²Department of Management Sciences, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan;

³Department of Business Administration, University of Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan

*E-mail: m_waqas_43@yahoo.com

Received for publication: 04 September 2015.

Accepted for publication: 05 December 2015.

Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to find out the relationship between gender equality and glass ceiling and its existence in the hierarchal structure of an organization. The study has used qualitative approach to deduce a hypothesis by choosing an ontological position namely “constructivism”. The research is based on primary and secondary data. The primary data was compiled by making several interviews with equality administrators at the four faculties of Umeå University. Each equality administrator was interviewed and policy documents were reviewed that were provided by the University. The interviewing was semi-structured in the sense that the questions were flexible and open ended and allowed the interviewees to elaborate their answers, gave a more accurate view and relevant answers to the investigation. The gathering of secondary data was made through the equality administrators at the different faculties at Umeå University. This empirical study revealed that Umeå University is working towards a more equal gender division in its hierarchical structure by giving the faculties a set of policies to reduce gender discrimination. However gender discrimination is observed at higher levels. Affirmative actions are suggested to eliminate the existing gender division.

Keywords: Gender Equality, Glass Ceiling, Hierarchal Structure

Introduction

Background

“Nordic countries, Iceland (1), Norway (2), Finland (3) and Sweden (4), continue to demonstrate the greatest equality between men and women” according to the World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report 2010. In the last decades, women are finding their way to gender equality, for this reason there has been strong investment in women education as nowadays for example they make up for more than half of all universities graduates. Their talent must have an opportunity in the working life world as top manager or politicians, that are dominated traditionally by men, and this transition now can be done as many countries in the developed world have introduced legislation’s that requires a minimum participation of women in business and politics (WEFORUM, 2010). In Sweden for example, equality between sexes has become a part of their life in the political and cultural process.

The work environment that women have often differs from what men have because of inequalities between genders (Cohen & Swim, 1995). Cohen and Swim state that women who pursue and work in situations with female minority groups have various expectations of what they will encounter in this male dominated world. Some of them are not caught up by this situation, while others think if they pursue with these situations is not worth the consequences that come at the end.

Kanter (1977) argues that the relative number of socially different people in a group is an essential part in shaping interaction dynamics. This view will help us in the further analysis to contextualize and determine the existence of the glass ceiling inside the organization. The glass ceiling phenomena means that in a hierarchical structure, the higher levels are not accessible to some people categories, such as women, regardless of their qualification.

Observing the glass ceiling effect is not easy, as it is an “invisible” effect. Indeed, the reasons why gender minorities cannot reach top levels are not clearly declared, they are invisible as a glass ceiling. As a consequence, by managing to observe a glass ceiling effect, we make gender inequality more visible in the organization, which then permits to make the gender regime of the society more visible as well. Observing inequalities in the organization can be a way to observe and understand, to make visible, some inequalities in the society (Aaltio & Kovalainen, 2003, p.190). This is one of the reasons why we chose to study glass ceiling. It seems to us interesting to manage & to make more visible inequalities said to be “invisible”.

Even though the gender gap has been reduced, there is still work to do. In Sweden, the number of professors at the Universities has increased by 34% in the past eight years. Although this could be considered as a positive trend, the uneven distribution of the sexes continues as for 2009, 80% of the professors were men (SCB, 2010). At Umeå University, the numbers are quite the same, demonstrating that women are a minority group amongst professors (SCB, 2010). For these reasons, it is important that researchers and academics continue emphasizing the inequality in group magnitude by conducting studies, researches and coming with new implications for the everyday life in the organizations.

The principal characteristic that makes the gender issue a really interesting topic to study is that it can be found in every aspect of the society, from the division of labour of the household to the global perception of genders in the society as a whole. Regarding the glass ceiling, it can be assumed that people find themselves in the position of a minority or stuck in one position, which in the case of managerial or academic functions are most often women.

Thus it is interesting to reflect on that theory and to create a practical understanding.

Purpose

The general aim of this paper is to look into gender issues in a practical environment, namely how gender equality is reflected upon in the organisational structure of Umeå University. An overall purpose is to investigate whether the phenomena of glass ceiling exists or not within the faculties of Umeå University based on primary and secondary data.

As the phenomena of glass ceiling can be apparent in any organisation, we focused on organisations close in proximity and who are active at a national level that can reflect the reality of the Swedish society. In order to make this study a true representative, interviews were made with all of the four faculties at Umeå University, with the intention to see if a discriminative correlation can be found between the staff members. Focus has been to ensure quality by perusal of results as well as previous studies.

Problem statement

Having stated the main purpose of this paper, a specific research problem must follow to adequately describe the direction of our paper. Our research question is formulated as follows: To what extent is Umeå University working towards equal gender opportunities for staff members in the hierarchical structure of the faculties?

Methodology

In a broad sense, this study falls into the qualitative paradigm of business research and we used a deductive approach since this study is meant to deduce a hypothesis that will be subjected to

empirical scrutiny (Bryman & Bell, 2007). For this study, we have chosen an ontological position namely constructivism “...which asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors.” (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p.23). As Bryman & Bell (2007) states, the constructivism position implies that social phenomena and categories are produced through social interaction and in a constant state of revision (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Since we are studying the structural division of gender in correlation with the social phenomena of glass ceiling, we will view these as socially constructed.

For this study we used primary and secondary data as our main sources of information. The primary data was compiled by making several interviews with “jämställsdshets ombudsmän” equality administrators at the faculties of Umeå University. We interviewed each equality administrator responsible for each faculty and reviewed the policy documents provided by the University. The reason why we chose to interview the equality administrators was because of their relevant positions concerning equality issues in human resources at Umeå University.

The interviews were made with the oral consent of each interviewee and recorded with notes.

The interview language was Swedish and the answers to the interview questions were translated into English. The interviews and translations were made by two individuals, this to ensure that the correct translations were made, not only grammatically but also contextually. The interviewing was semi-structured in the sense that the questions were flexible and open-ended and allowed the interviewees to elaborate their answers, giving us a more accurate view and relevant answers to our investigation. Furthermore, the interviews were held for the duration of 45 minutes for each respondent. The gathering of secondary data was made through the equality administrators at the different faculties at Umeå University.

Literature review

Gender individuals are key factors in the organizational processes, being inter-individual, structural and symbolic by nature and also the core of organizational life. Expectations as to gender roles are influencing us, who we are, how we behave and how others see us (Aaltio & Kavalainen, 2003). In our routine life we interact with people, at the same time as we internalize norms and rules, to live up to these expectations and in some way we perhaps constrain ourselves in different ways (Alvesson & Due Billing, 1997).

Gender division of labour is historically constructed and work is often labelled as female or male (Alvesson & Due Billing, 1997). As a foothold in organisational research, the concept of gender referred to women and men as bipolar constructions, as fixed and unitary, with female and male as opposing concepts. After the development of gender theory and its influence on organization research, notions of ‘masculine’ and ‘femininity’ were defined as socially constructed and were constantly reconstructed. Therefore definitions of the feminine and masculine constantly reflect upon the values ascribed to women and men and originate from a historically embedded understanding of their relation to each other (Aaltio & Kavalainen, 2003).

The main sources of managerial stress that affect women at work are overload with the feeling of being undervalued, and then having to acquire male managerial skills, being assertive and confident. Women managers are overloaded due to the pressure to work harder to prove them. “Women have to prove their competence, whereas men have to prove their incompetence” (Rosser, 2004, p.41). The fact that women are less oriented towards careers could be explained by their positions as subordinates in the organization where they develop an anti-success culture. The central position will develop attitudes and values which makes it easier for the people to move upwards in the hierarchy (Alvesson & Due Billing, 1997). The example of organization theories comes from a social constructionist perspective, in which identities are defined and redefined through their

relationships with others: we become socially constructed through work groups, teams, and interactions in changing and constant relationships. Gender “gets done” trend expands not solely through or within these interactions, but also through processes and expectations in organisations. For example via stereotypical image of a secretary is female and that of a police officer is male. In a similar vein, nurses and airhostesses become defined as female, and their femininity becomes an “asset” for the empowerment through complex gendered social relationships; whereas femininities, professionalism and culturally stereotypical attitudes become a mixed web of professional image (Aaltio & Kavalainen, 2003).

The concept of gender differences leads to separate spheres in the family and marketplace division of labour, which in turn results in women’s limited control of valued resources and access to positions of power. There are some underlying discourse on women’s work that is said that women should take care of children and housework. The stereotypes of female and male are comprise of opposite qualities; females are gentle, soft, family oriented, moral, emotional, delicate and weak; and males are aggressive, unemotional, success-oriented, pragmatic, tough and strong (Aaltio & Kavalainen, 2003). However, women are also involved in this social construction and as long as it is women who are the ones who take family responsibilities, they will be at a competitive disadvantage in career advancement (Rix & Stone, 1984, in Alvesson & Due Billing, 1997).

The article by Lederman (2006) explains how difficult it is for women to break the barriers of getting into male dominant fields. In the academic area, for example, becoming university female professors are very likely to face discrimination, either intentionally or unintentionally, especially in the fields of science and engineering where there women are a great minority. Inequity for women in science departments may arise by amalgamation of bias for hiring men over women with identical accomplishments and assessment criteria that disadvantage women (Lederman, 2006).

As Kanter (1977, in Aaltio & Kovalainen, 2003) argue, gender is an integral part of organization structure, it is a structuring factor shaping the organization and could even be assumed as the core of organizational life. Organizations must be the reflections of the gender structures existing in society by observing the repetition of gender in organization; researchers have been able to distinguish the ‘glass ceiling effect’ (Kanter, 1977, in Aaltio & Kovalainen, 2003).

Glass ceiling means that, in a hierarchical structure, the higher levels are not accessible to some people categories, regardless of their qualification (Cotter et al., 2001). It is a discrimination which can be based on gender, or also on other criteria, such as racism. The metaphor “glass ceiling” is used, as it implies that the barriers that impede people to move upwards the career ladder are invisible, they are not clearly assumed (Ibid.). Thus, according to the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, glass ceiling effect deals with the “artificial barriers to the advancement of women and minorities”, it is the “unseen, yet un-breachable barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements” (1995, in Cotter et al., 2001, p.656). The glass ceiling effect insinuates that “gender (or other) disadvantages are stronger at the top of the hierarchy than at lower levels and that these disadvantages become worse later in a person’s career” (Cotter et al., 2001, p.655).

In order to state that a glass ceiling exists in an organization, Cotter et al. (2001) have defined four criteria that must be observed.

The first condition states that: “a glass ceiling inequality represents a gender or racial difference that is not explained by other job-relevant characteristics of the employee” (Cotter et al., 2001, p.657). This implies that before declaring that there is a glass ceiling effect, criteria that are relevant to perform a job (such as education, experience, motivations, abilities...) must be carefully controlled. The glass ceiling effect must reflect discrimination on work competences, and not only labour market inequality. Nevertheless, some controversial issues can occur on discrimination

research, which can affect the glass ceiling effect. On the one hand, it is assumed that it is impossible that all the job-relevant employee characteristics affecting outcome could be measured and controlled, some differences in outcome may not reflect discrimination. On the other hand, the study of job characteristics may lead to examine too many job characteristics, which could hide rather than detect discrimination. For instance, controlling occupational changes as a job-relevant characteristic can impede to detect glass-ceiling; it implies that climbing the career ladder is a relevant characteristic to measure competence, but the glass ceiling effect infers that there is discrimination to climb this ladder. Finally, defining job-relevant characteristics permitting to control discrimination is not evident. Some disagreement can appear, such as disagreements on family characteristics, some argue that family characteristic is a legitimate criteria affecting productivity that must be taken into account in glass ceiling studies, whereas others disagree (Cotter et al., 2001).

The second criteria to define glass ceiling affirms that “a glass ceiling inequality represents a gender or racial difference that is greater at higher levels of an outcome than at lower levels of an outcome” (Cotter et al., 2001, p.658).

This means that the higher inequality must be observed at the higher level. It is a kind of crescendo of inequalities according to the level; at a low level, inequalities are lower than at a high level. Thus, this “higher levels criterion” can explain why most of the empirical studies on glass ceiling effect are limited on professional or managerial samples. It must also be noticed that gender inequality at high level does not always represent a glass ceiling effect. Indeed, if the same ‘amount’ of inequality is observed at a lower level, it is only a matter of gender inequality.

Finally, even if this higher level criterion is commonly accepted, it is not universal (Harland & Berhide, 1994, in Cotter et al., 2001). Thus, Harlan and Berheide (1994, in Cotter et al., 2001) states the glass-ceiling can also apply to low-wage workers, as it must be applied to all classes, even for those with limited possibility of ascension. So, a glass ceiling effect could exist at low level, but it must imply that higher inequalities must be observed at level just above this low level. The fact that inequalities increase with the increase of level is a criteria to conclude that a glass ceiling exists (Cotter et al., 2001).

The third criteria specifies that “a glass ceiling inequality represents a gender or racial inequality in the chances of advancement into higher levels, not merely the proportions of each gender or race currently at those higher levels”.(Cotter et al., 2001, p.659)

“Promotions to higher positions and raises of income are the proper subject of glass ceiling test” (Naff & Thomas 1994; Reskin & Padavic 1994; Stroh, Brett & Riley 1996, in Cotter et al, p.659). Thus, studying Glass ceiling effect is not only making a static comparison of outcome level, it requires also to measure the change over time (e.g., England et al. 1988; Hanna, Schomann & Blossfeld 1990; Rosenfeld 1980, in Cotter et al., p.660). This means that a glass ceiling effect can be declared if inequalities for promotions to higher positions, and inequalities concerning increase of incomes are stronger than inequalities for promotion and income increases at lower levels.

Finally, the fourth criteria assert that “a glass ceiling inequality represents a gender or racial inequality that increases over the course of a career” (Cotter et al., 2001, p.661). Glass ceiling can be defined as the fact that disadvantages grow over the career (e.g., Morgan, 1998, in Cotter et al, 2001, p.660). The notion of ceiling means that when a certain level is reached, a high discrimination can impede to go further, it blocks the possibility of promotion (Cotter et al., 2001).

Thus, these four criteria permit to define the glass ceiling effect. They enable to distinguish it from simple gender inequalities effect. Globally, the difference relies on the “crescendo” effect implies by the glass ceiling effect. Inequalities are higher in higher levels. As we said before, this

“higher level criterion” explains why the observation of glass ceiling is done above all on professional or managerial samples.

Finally, it is possible to add that the implementation of affirmative actions could be a way to break the glass ceiling, although this is controversial (Heilman, 1997). Affirmative actions are policy used to combat differences between groups in earning and employment (Coate & Loury, 1993, p.1220). However, Heilman states that affirmative actions could “act to promote the stereotyping of women suggesting, that rather than being a remedy for sex discrimination” (Heilman, 1997, p.1877).

Thus, Aaltio and Kovalainen (2003) define the glass-ceiling phenomena as the global tendency for women to be a minority in managerial position. In the same way, it can be assumed that there is also a global tendency for women to be a minority in leadership position, as it is also a high level position. More generally, it seems that minority gender group will be less represented on high position, such as leadership position. The Social Identity Theory can help to explain this phenomenon.

Tajfel (1972, in Hogg & Terry, 2001, p.2) defines the concept of social identity as “the individual’s knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership”. This knowledge of membership allows people to define themselves in comparison with others, belonging to other groups. People want to know who they are in comparison with the others. They compare their own group, which is the in-group with the others ones, the out-groups, and can describe who they are and evaluate themselves in comparison with the others. They refer to a group to define themselves; it is a process of identification or self-conceptualization.

The self-conceptualization can be based on a “shared representation of “us” defined in terms of an in-group prototype” (Hogg, 2001, p.200). This means that there, in a group, is a prototype that represents the main characteristics of the group, and enables people to self-categorize, to define themselves. Thus, when group membership becomes salient, “leadership perceptions, evaluations and effectiveness are increasingly based on how-prototypical the leader is perceived to be” (Hogg, 2001, p.201). Thus, when group membership becomes salient, people categorize themselves in relation to their in-group prototype, which lead them to become depersonalized, and as a consequence to conform to the in-group prototype and exhibit normative behaviour, the behaviour expected by this prototype.

Thus, groups which are highly cohesive and salient can conform to organizational prototypes reflecting dominant rather than minority cultural attributes, and as a consequence exclude minorities from top leadership positions (Hogg & Terry, 2001). So, it is assumed that, in Western societies, it can be difficult for gender minority to reach top leadership position in organization. Indeed, organizational prototypes, such as the dress, attitudes, interaction styles and so on can be defined by the society in a way that impede minorities to match them well (Ibid.). Consequently, minorities are less likely to become leader under such conditions where proto-typicality is more important than leadership stereo-typicality, which is to say under conditions where organizational identification and cohesion are very high (Eagly et al., 1995, in Hogg & Terry, 2001).

Empirical study

The empirical study shows the findings and results discovered in the study of “To what extent is Umeå University working towards equal gender opportunities for staff members in the hierarchical structure of the faculties?” To enable research to be elaborated, policies for staff members have been stated in addition to the qualitative interviews of all of the four faculties at

Umeå University. The Faculty of social science were however unable to provide all the results and is therefore mostly presented with data from the interview.

Umeå University policy program for gender equality

Umeå University intends to be the most gender equal university and being the forefront in the area of gender equality both concerning students and employees (Jämställdhetsrådet at Umeå University, 2006). According to the gender equality council (GEC) at Umeå University (n, 2006, p.3) gender equity is: "... A quality insurance for all employees and students to be given the opportunities to perform his or her best..." To reach greater gender equality Umeå University has posted quantitative goals (Jämställdhetsrådet at Umeå University, 2006, p.8):

- Professors 40% women
- PhD 40% women
- Lector 40% women

The other employee categories do not have specific goals even though Umeå University management has decided that irrespective of employment-category the underrepresented sex should amount to 40% (Jämställdhetsrådet at Umeå University, 2006, p.8).

The faculties are responsible to reach the goals constructed by the Umeå University management. The four faculties; The Faculty of Medicine, The Faculty of Science and Technology, The Faculty of Arts and The Faculty of Social Sciences, are obliged to do so through employment committees, that have an important role in the work for gender equality. Each faculty have their own gender equality administrator, which is essential in guiding the development of the Umeå University business (Jämställdhetsrådet at Umeå University, 2006).

The Faculty of Medicine

Interview with Johnsson, C.

Equality representative at the Faculty of Medicine

October 13, 2010

The Faculty of Medicine is working with gender equality from the perspective that the GEC have schemed (Johnsson, 2010). The Faculty of Medicine has a long-term goal to increase the number of female Professors, as at this time have the division of 76 % men and 24 % women (se fig 4.2).

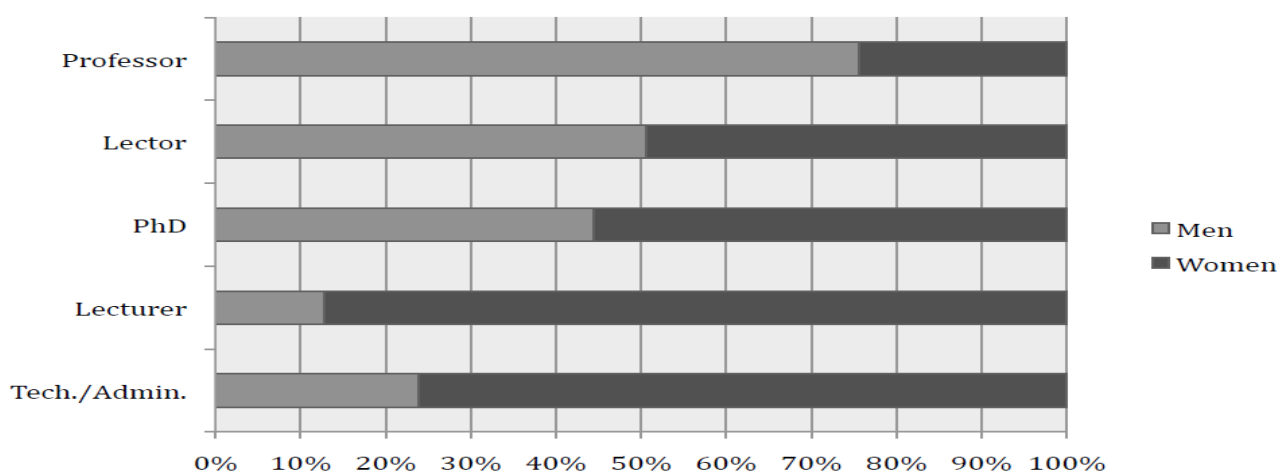


Figure 1: Based on information from the faculty of medicine in 2009 (Johnsson, 2010).

The faculty's solution to create a more gender equal employment category's is to increase the qualification means for women by encouraging two female lecturers to get a financial support to

enable accomplish professor qualifications each year. The faculty do not use affirmative action, as they don't see the action as a solution. But if there is two people that have the same qualifications the faculty should strive to hire the one who belongs to sex who is under-represented in that section. To further erase the inequalities the faculty of medicine encourage discussion and not stillness (Johnsson, 2010).

As can be seen in the figure (fig 1) the faculty of medicine does not, during 2009, reach the goals that were set by the GEC, having the underrepresented gender reaching a 40% minimum level. Only the PhD and the lecturers' categories accomplish the goals, the other three categories have not accomplished them (Johnsson, 2010).

The Faculty of Science and Technology

Interview with Lundin, A.

Chief Secretary of the Faculty of Science and Technology

October 13, 2010

At the faculty of science, a substantial work is being done to even out the gender inequities. In this faculty only one of the five employment-categories reach the stated goals by the GEC (Lundin, 2010). The faculty of science and technology have historically had a hard time recruiting women, but according to Lundin (2010) gender equality is of significance for the quality. There is a great problem that Lundin (2010) highlights and that is the issue of female catch 22. As there is a minority of female teachers and thereby is only a few female role models for the female students, the results is that females do not feel as fitted for further employment. To reach a greater equality and break the catch 22, the faculty is not using affirmative action but they are working with a mentoring project for women that they expect to bring results (Lundin, 2010).

The faculty of science and technology have a very low percentage of women in the employment category of Professors, with only 12% (fig. 2). The only category where the faculty reaches the GEC goals is in the part of technical and administrative personnel, where the percentage is 50/50 (fig.4.3).

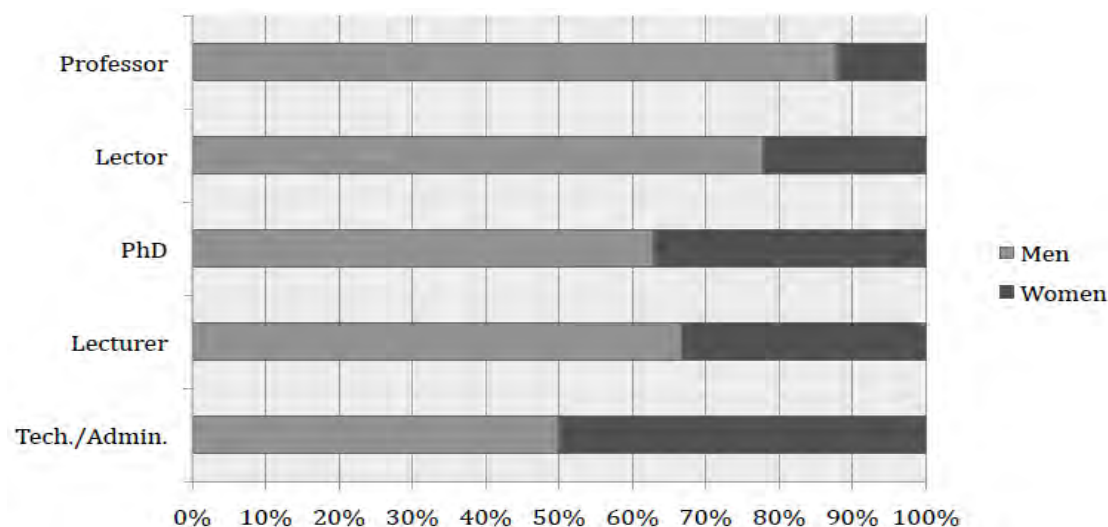


Figure 2: Based on preliminary data from 2009 (Lundin, 2010).

The Faculty of Arts

Interview with Aléx, P.

Chief Secretary of the Faculty of Arts

October 18, 2010

Openly accessible at <http://www.european-science.com>

In the faculty of art the emphasis relies on the fact that students meet both male and female lecturers as the faculty find the broadness important for the quality. The recruitment committee at the faculty strives to reach the GEC goals, of a more equal gender division at the institutions (Al  x, 2010). In the recruitment process there is no affirmative action being used in advance, but if there is two people that have the same qualifications in the process, the faculty should hire the one who belongs to sex who is under-represented in that section.

(Al  x, 2010) stated that the faculty of arts also finds the use of experts vital in the recruitment process, this to enable the employment of the most matching applicant. According to Al  x (2010) the faculty of art “have a more equal gender division than other faculties”, but according to the statistics given, the faculty only reach the goals of the GEC in one category, Lector (see fig. 3). All the other categories have either women or men that are the underrepresented gender, i.e. less than 40% (fig.4.4). In the faculty of art women have the lowest percentage in the category Professors (22%), even though the low number, the faculty does not have a program or solution to enable women to reach higher positions (Al  x, 2010).

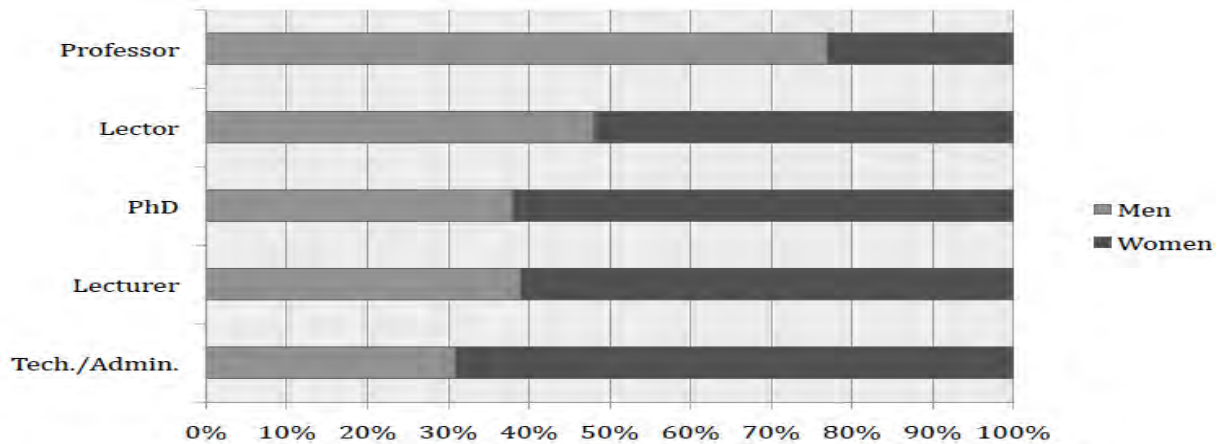


Figure 3: Based on information from Al  x (2010).

The Faculty of Social Sciences

Interview with   gren, K.

Equality administrator at the Faculty of Social Sciences

October 18, 2010

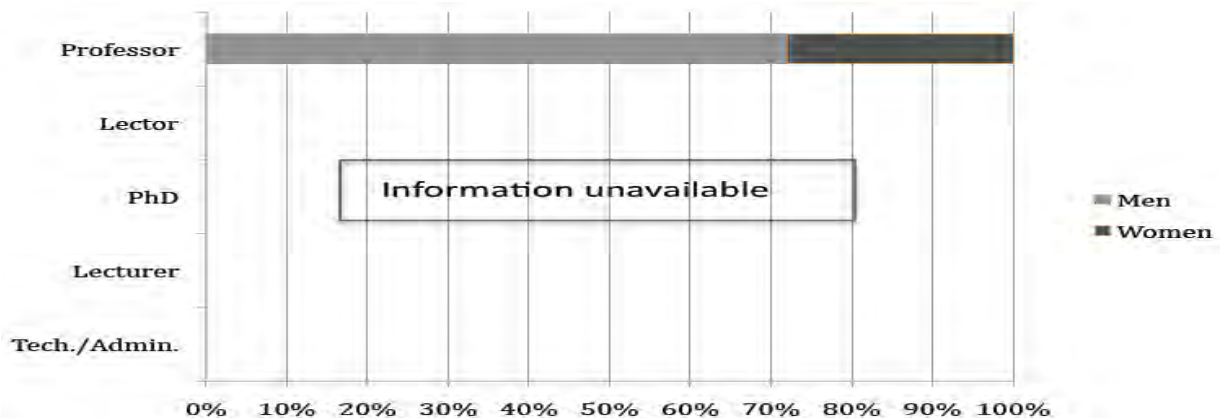


Figure 4: Based on information from   gren (2010).

The faculty of social science does not have the same extent of problems with gender inequality as the other faculties and the reason for that, according to Ågren (2010) are the students and personal who take this mission in another way. The faculty realises the importance of having both women and men in the recruitment committee to enable gender equality. The faculty does not have a program of their own to project women for the higher positions. The faculty, however, encourages women to apply for higher positions and always tries to propose women and men for positions as they seem perfect (Ågren, 2010). The faculty was unable to offer all the statistics; (see fig. 4) they could however notify that the category of professors consisted of 28% women and 72% men (Ågren, 2010).

Analysis

In the analysis, we compared the different faculties that we had investigated and observed whether they fulfil the University's policies on gender division.

From the empirical results we can observe that each faculty has adopted, to comply with, and is following the policies that were set out by the Gender Equality Council (GEC) at Umeå University. However, as the statistics show, the faculties have not achieved the goals set out by the GEC and are currently unequal in gender division. The reason why we can draw the conclusion stated above is because of the observations that we made from the empirical results.

In different faculties, we observed that gender division varies depending on the employment category. In the majority of the faculties, we observed that professors are predominantly made up by men, ranging between 72-85 percent depending on the faculty, whilst in the administrative category, women represent a majority ranging between 50-76 percent. In the University context, professors are considered to be higher in the hierarchical structure than administrative workers and what we observe is that fewer women are present in the higher levels. As mentioned in the literature review of the "glass ceiling", the third and the fourth criteria state that; the inequality in high chances or blockage of advancement to high level positions, and this can be applied in the case of Umeå University as there is a clear division between men and women due to hierarchical level in the structures.

As we mentioned in the literature review, SIT can help to understand the glass ceiling effect concerning leadership position. What's more, it seems possible to extend this explanation to the total glass ceiling effect, and not only on leadership position perspective. Indeed, it could be presumed, that generally, people at top-level position are perceived as prototype, as the people who fit the best with the group, permitting people to define themselves. In the case of Umeå University it can be difficult for women, the gender minority, to reach such a level, as people from gender minority are likely to be perceived as less representative of the group. They less fit the group characteristics, which can raise difficulties for majority members of the group to define themselves.

In connection to the policies the faculty of medicine is the only faculty that has two employment categories, Lectors and PhD, which reach the policy goals made by the GEC of having at least a 40% minimum level of the underrepresented sex. The faculty of science and technology and that faculty of Art only succeed to reach the GEC goals in one category, technical and administrative personal and Lectors. Important to emphasize is the fact that statistics were missing from the faculty of social science during all of the categories except the employment category professors. This will obstruct the comparison between the faculties. In comparison between the faculties it can be observed that the faculty of science and technology have the lowest amount of women working in all of its employment categories. Also, it can be seen in the student gender division that the female students are less represented in the faculty programs. This can be due to the

fact that the faculty of science and technology has fewer female role models at high-level employment categories that engage female student to strive for such a position.

Neither of the faculties were pro affirmative action, even though they all admitted that in the case of applicants having the same qualification, the sex who were underrepresented should be prioritised. Half of the faculties, the faculty of science and technology and the faculty of medicine have programs to encourage women to reach higher status positions. The faculty of science and technology use their own program for mentorship to strengthen the minority of women. The faculty of medicine, on the other hand, distributes a financial support to enable women to accomplish high status. As stated in the literature review, the situation where women have a subordinate position can emerge into an anti-success culture. The faculty of medicines' solution to enable women reach higher qualifications for high positions could be assumed as a type of affirmative action.

Conclusion

In this part, we reflected upon the empirical findings, draw inferences from the previous analysis to the theoretical framework and made conclusions with the intention of answering our problem statement.

From our empirical study, we observed that Umeå University is working towards a more equal gender division in its hierarchical structure. This is done by giving the faculties a set of policies which are intended to reduce gender discrimination. However, it is questionable whether these measures are sufficient enough to increase the equal opportunities for the staff at the different faculties or not.

In the empirical study, we found divisions that could be linked to gender inequalities, as only a few faculty employment categories are in line with the policies stated by Umeå University. From our observations, we could see a correlation between the faculties, where female staff to a higher extent is working in the low-status categories and men were to a higher extent working in high-status categories. The pattern noted is in line with the arguments made by the glass ceiling phenomena in the literature review. If the category of professors is being reviewed, there is clear resemblance between all the faculties, and it is that women are a minority. Minorities have, due to proto-typicality, a harder time to reach the majority positions as they are perceived as less representatives. Even though the practical findings that were made, there is evidence which could conclude that a glass ceiling do exist in the hierarchical structures of Umeå University.

As the theory states, affirmative action could be a breaker of the glass ceiling and therefore it can be argued that the University uses this approach to avoid the phenomena of glass ceiling although not explicitly. Indeed, the use of affirmative action is said to be controversial, as it can lead to increased stereo-typicality, and thus, increased discrimination. Affirmative action is also called positive discrimination, consequently, which could explain why the faculties deny the use of affirmative action, even though it seems possible to state that they actually use them.

Even though Umeå University has strong intention to eliminate the existing gender division, the faculties do not seem to be able to reach their goals. There are substantial majorities and minorities with regards to gender due to employment categories, and there are reasons to assert that it is a glass ceiling present at the staff member structure of Umeå University. A solution as said above could be affirmative action, and even though it can be argued that Umeå University uses a form of affirmative actions that we had not been able to see as the breakage of the glass ceiling. The conclusion could either be that because the research is only comprised by limited data over time or that the form of affirmative action is not applicable.

Future studies

To underwrite if a discriminative correlation can be found in Umeå University or not there should be quantitative studies made of the staff members qualities with regards to gender, the study also needs to stretch over a significant time period. Further investigations should also be made from the solution, of affirmative action, to the problematic endeavour of a gender division and what complications it could implicate.

References

Printed literature

- Aaltio, I. & Kovalainen, A. (2003) Using Gender in Exploring Organizations, Management, and Change, in Czarniawska, B. & Sevón, G (eds) *The Northern Lights - Organization theory in Scandinavia*. Liber/Abstrat/Copenhagen Business School press, p.175-197
- Alvesson, M. & Due Billing, Y. (1997) *Understanding Gender and Organisation*, SAGE publications Ltd., London
- Bryman, A & Bell, E. (2007). *Business Research Methods*, 2nd ed., Oxford university press.
- Coate, S. & Loury, G.C. (1993), Will affirmative-actions policies eliminate stereotype negative stereotype, in *The American Economic Review*.
- Cohen, L.L. & Swim J.K (1995) The differential impact of gender ratios on women and men: tokenism, self-confidence, and expectations, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 21, 876-884
- Cotter, D.A., Hermsen, J.M., Ovadia, S., Vanneman, R. (2001) The Glass Ceiling Effect, *Social Forces*, 80(2), 655-681, University of North Carolina Press
- Falk, E. & Grizard, E. (2005) *The Glass Ceiling, Persists: Women Leaders in Communication Companies*
- Heilman, M.E. (1997), Sex Discrimination and the Affirmative Action Remedy: The role of sex stereotypes, *Journal of Business Ethics*.
- Hogg, M.A (2001) Social identification, Group Prototypicality, and Emergent Leadership, in Hogg, M.A. & Terry, D.J. (eds) *Social identity processes in organizational contexts*. Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press.
- Hogg, M.A & Terry D.J. (2001) Social identity theory and organizational processes, in Hogg, M.A. & Terry, D.J. (eds) *Social identity processes in organizational contexts*. Philadelphia, PA: Psychology Press.
- Kanter, M.R. (1977a) Some effects of proportions on group life: skewed sex ratios and responses to token women, *American Journal of Sociology*, 82, 965-990.
- Rosser, S.V. (2004) *The Science Glass Ceiling, Academic Women Scientists and Struggle to Succeed*, Routledge

Digital sources

- Jämställdhetsrådet, 2006, För ett jämställt universitet 2010 -Policyprogram för jämställdhet vid Umeå universitet 2006–2010. http://www.anstalld.UmeåUniversity.se/digitalAssets/23/23541_jamstpolicy.pdf
- Statistiska Centralbyrån (SCB), *Employees in higher education 2009*. Retrieved 2010-10-20 http://www.scb.se/Pages/PressRelease____295279.aspx
- World Economic Forum (WEFORUM), *The Global Gender Gap Report 2010*. Retrieved 2010-10-20 <http://www.weforum.org/pdf/gendergap/report2010.pdf>